DEDICATION.

A SERMON

By the Very Rev. WM. M. JEFFERIS, D. D.

Preached on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Rev. John A. Goodfellow as Rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kensington, Philad'a, March 3, 1912

In commemorating again, this morning, your Dedication Day, the 40th Anniversary of the founding of this Church, and the entrance of your one and only Rector upon his life-long rectorship, one cannot fail to indulge for a moment in a look backward. And what do we find? Why, only a little over 40 years ago, *i.e.* in the year 1868, so far at least, as spiritual work on the part of this Branch of The "Church of Christ" was concerned: Absolutely nothing! Here the people in this growing neighborhood were as "sheep without a shepherd." As they wandered on, unguided, and unsheperded; not so much "Church Neglectors" as "Church Neglected," one can see them, feeling after God, if, haply, they might find Him, yet hear them crying out, in their conscious spiritual needs, "I looked on my right hand, but there was no man; no man careth for my soul!" Then the ear of the Good Shepherd heard the cry of the wandering sheep and helped them. The need was met by supply. And so, under the splendid leadership of the late Joseph M. Christian, assisted by Mr. Wm. Tardif, the present beloved, faithful and venerable rector's warden of this parish a Church Sunday School was started in this immediate neighborhood in the year 1869, in a hall which had been hired for the purpose.

Due, no doubt, to the unflagging zeal and devotion of its originators, and of those who, from time to time, were able and willing to assist them the School flourished: growing not only in quantity, but in quality, to such a degree that, at last, in the year 1871, a request came from the parents of the children, who had been so well trained and taught in the Sunday-school, that they also might share in the blessings which the Church, which we love had so evidently brought to their beloved offspring. This was, of course, a most happy augury, and meant not only religious services, but, also, the services (as soon as possible) of a stated minister. This task, however, was not easy of accomplishment; for those few "sheep in the wilderness" were but a feeble folk, small in resources as well as in numbers, and yet the good "shepherd" (as ever) heard the "bleating of His flock," flew to their relief. Soon, therefore, we see one of the "under-shepherds" (by name, the Rev. Dr. J. M. Claxton, the then rector of the Church of the Advent, York Ave. and Buttonwood St.) manifesting a definite interest in the developing Mission, and promising to take it in the future under his official oversight. As he, however, (already occupied as he was in the work of his own important parish) could not possibly give to the new venture the time and attention it deserved, and imperatively needed, a young man, the Rev. Alfred A Rickert, of this city, was then made a Deacon, and given charge of the services which (through the mercy of "The Good Shepherd" and the hunger of the sheep) had been at last started in the Sunday-School hired hall. Acceptable, however, as were the ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Rickert, his strength and failing eye-sight were not equal to the exacting task, and so, to the regret of all, in six short months he was compelled reluctantly to resign.

As a matter of course, it was not an easy task to secure, (for what was, then, so small and seemingly undesirable a fold) another earnest "under-shepherd." The services, however, so auspiciously started, were not allowed to lapse. Through the kind assistance of the Rev. Charles Logan and others of the local clergy, the ministrations of the Church were kept up, week after week; until, at last, to the great relief and joy of all, the present beloved Rector, "The Rev. John A. Goodfellow" was called to be the first rector of the "incipient parish," and, 40 years ago, on March 1st, 1872, entered upon his duties.

At once there was a change. The 23 communicants, already connected with "The Mission," were filled with new hopefulness under the new and inspiring leadership; immediately "the people"—"all the people,"—"had a mind to work." They came themselves to the services and they brought others, until, within three months, after the new Rector's entering upon his blessed work, "the hired-hall" had to be abandoned, because it could no longer hold the sheep, who were, by that time, flocking to the fold of "The Church of the Good Shepherd."

Nothing daunted, however, Rector Goodfellow took the $300. which represented the sum total of the efforts of the little flock, up to the time of his coming, in the direction of a future church edifice, and, with it, alone, in hand; started out to make the ideal real. He, with his accustomed quiet energy and directness, at once secured, (on a $7000., 6 per cent, ground rent) the valuable and most desirable lot, upon which this present church is now standing, and, (after applying for permission from the City Councils to do so) he set about the erection of the frame chapel, which, to this day, (after these many years) is still being used as your Parish House, for the descendants of those by whom it was originally erected. The cost of all this was $4000.: and yet, so acceptable and devoted was your beloved Rector, and so earnest and liberal his parishioners, and personal friends, that, amazing as it may seem, in addition to carrying their regular expenses during the same period, they were able to pay off this, to them, almost crushing debt in two short years.

As might well have been expected, therefore, the building and occupancy of the New Chapel gave, at once, a great impetus to the new parish, and the congregation, not only steadily increased in numbers, but, also, in devotional and spiritual power. The ground rent, amounting to $420. per annum, having been felt to be a burden, hindering the full and free development of the work, in many needful ways, the noble and indefatigable young Rector made another strenuous effort, and then raised the sum of $3,000., one-half of which was applied to the reduction of the ground-rent to $5,500., and the other half to adding some much needed improvements to the Chapel. Outside:—a tower was erected, and the exterior re-painted, while, within, the walls were plastered, and the ceiling lined

with lumber. All tending to beautify the place of God's Sanctuary, and, to make the place of His feet glorious. As we, historically pass on, in our look backward, we notice that, about the year 1887, a quarter of a century ago, what is called "*The Convocation System*," by which the Diocese is divided into Six Districts or Convocations, was established and set in motion. At the first meeting of "The N. E. Convocation" in which this church was situated, your alert and indefatigable Rector took quick advantage of this opportunity, then and there, given him, to lay before his brethren of the clergy and laity the tremendous success of this new work, which he said, was only hindered from making still more rapid progress by the balance ($5,500.) on the original ground rent, which was absorbing $275. annually of the Parish income for interest. As the outcome of his splendid appeal, two members of other parishes, offered to give $100. each, towards paying off the ground-rent: *provided*, the Parish itself would raise for the same purpose $800. within a year. As usual, the noble Rector went at it earnestly again, and, in 11 months, had accomplished his alloted task,—thus reducing the ground-rent to $4,500.

So pleased, however, was one of the original donors, that he promised to give another $100. if the little flock would try again to raise an additional $400. within the next 30 days. As might have been expected, this, also, was done; thus reducing the ground-rent to $4,000. making the resulting interest-charge upon the parish only $200. per annum. The good work, so auspiciously started, however had, of course, to go on, and so our beloved Rector, Goodfellow, encouraged by the promise of additional financial assistance from his former "helpers in Christ," as well as from the now enthusiastic N. E. Convocation, decided to endeavor to pay off the balance of the ground-rent within the following year, and when he did this, he had the satisfaction of knowing that he had, not only freed the church lot from the last $4000. of the ground-rent, but that the feeble-folk, filled with the love of God, and of "Holy Church," had up to that time, paid, (in principal and interest) upon their ground-rent alone, the startling sum of $13,000.

One might have thought forsooth, that "The Church of the Good Shepherd" now entirely freed from debt, would have desired to have a breathing spell before entering upon another

period of strenuous exertion. But, No! Both Priest and people felt the imperative need of a suitable church building, and so *a new Church* they were determined in some way, at once, to obtain. This time, however, because of past experiences, without a cent of mortgage or debt of any kind, and the "Christian Spirit" of the community seemed, instinctively to honor this high and holy resolve, for, daily, in à really astonishing way subscriptions poured in, even through the mail, and from persons, (non-Churchmen as well as Churchmen) who were entirely unknown to the Rector, or even to his people, but glad to show their sympathy with the splendid effort of this "under-shepherd" and his flock, to erect a stone church to God's "greater glory" without a dollar of debt upon it at its final completion. And when, at last, the new church fund was completed, and it became necessary to move the Chapel to its present site, (so as to leave its former site free for the erection of the newer and larger building) even this additional and (so to speak) unexpected expense was, most unexpectedly and providently provided for. Just when most needed, for Dr. Chas. C. Harrison (late Provost of the University of Penna.) then, returning from a sea voyage, and desiring to make a thank-offering to God for his complete recovery from a serious illness, (strange to say) wrote to Rector Goodfellow, asking whether any more money were needed for the new church project, afterwards, gladly and generously, enclosing his personal cheque for "Five Hundred Dollars." Thus, as we look backwards to this blessed feast of the dedication of this "Temple of the Living God," to its feeble beginnings in the Sunday-school and the hired hall; then to the coming of your noble Rector, just 40 years ago, with the consequent purchase of lot and erection of the wooden chapel, followed by the building and paying for of this splendid stone edifice. How, I say, can you all, pastor and people, fail to lift your hearts in profoundest gratitude to God and exclaim, from out of the very depths of your souls, "Hitherto hath the Lord indeed helped us."

For, ceasing to look backward, think, beloved: As we look around with grateful pride to-day, What, I ask you, do we see? Why, you see, in a word, the great and noble Parish of the Good Shepherd, one of the most completely appointed, and best

conducted parishes in this great Diocese, with all that that implies, *i.e.* with :

a. A Church the equal as a House of God to any in Phila., and superior in many respects to most. *b.* A Congregation, which, devout, well instructed, and exemplary to a notable degree, still consists, in spite of constant removals of a changing population, of 425 bona-fide communicants, with baptized persons and adherents amounting to many times that number; *c.* A Service which, whether we refer to the devoted and skilful choir-master or to his large and well-trained choir; or to the church-liness of the services themselves; or to the earnest manner in which they are conducted by the Rector, and taken part in by the people: is, to my mind, seldom equalled and rarely surpassed by any parish in this city or elsewhere. And when we look around, still further, for the cause of all this, where, I ask you can we find it to-day but, under God, in a loyal and devoted people who for 40 years, like Israel, have followed this Moses, this Man of God, your one and only Rector; as he, under the guidance of Heaven has led you through the wilderness into this land of promise where you sojourn to-day. He it is who came to you, I say, in your feeble beginnings, and gave to you, of his youth and strength, and resistless zeal, to rally your scattered forces for God and lead them to this very hour, a hard-fought fight, to a sure and certain victory; what, I dare to ask, is this parish then to-day but the "Incarnation" (so to speak,) of John A. Goodfellow as he stands before you, my brothers, as preacher, pastor and christian priest in his ripened manhood to-day !

As he looks, therefore, once more over this church and congregation on this 40th Anniversary of his coming among you, what could more suitably express the holy emotions of his grateful soul, as he recognizes every soul, as every beam and stone and rafter, as his, thought of in his lonely visions, prayed for in his Gethsemanes, and worked for, and pleaded for throughout these many years, than the words of Isaiah in his reminiscent vision: "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me." For who but he obtained the lot and planned and paid for Chapel and Church; during those early days that truly tried the hearts of men, who but he, next, at a cost of $3,000. erected the brick addition to "House," the constantly

increasing Sunday-school? Who but he, 15 years ago, raised, with the exception of about $400., entirely outside the parish $5,000. for the new and much needed Rectory which has ever since been the pride of the parish, and an unending and well-deserved comfort to its noble and hard working Rector? Do you tell me, beloved, that on Easter Day, 1906, the heirs of the late Henry Budd, gave the sum of $3,750. to the parish to establish *The Henry Budd Memorial Fund for the Poor*, or (b) that $12,000. has since been, from outside, presented to the parish as a Permanend Endowment Fund? or, again, (c) since his decease *The Richarnson L. Wright Choir-Endowment Fund* of $500. has been created.? Do you refer to the installation of the church organ at a cost of $2,500? To the purchase and presentation to the Church of what is known as The Watson Machine Property by Mr. Isaac Schlichter, and to the subsequent tiling of the church aisles by the same generous vestryman and his noble wife, as a memorial of their daughter's marriage ?

Do you expect me to "walk about your Zion," and behold all the windows filled with memorials of dear departed ones? Do you wish me to notice the Bell weighing 900 lbs. in the church tower, largely paid for by the efforts of the Sunday-school children? Then the beautiful paintings on the walls of the Church, the gift of our late vestryman, Samuel Budd? or, to read The Mural Tablet, erected by her son, to his venerable mother's blessed memory, she having "fallen on-sleep" as a charter member of the Parish at the great age of 103 years? or, (last but by no means least) do you tell me, that three years ago, under the auspices of the Girls' Friendly Society a fund for a *Now Parish House* was started, and that now it contains over $10,000. with the practical certainty that the new and much-needed structure, a memorial to the blessed dead of the parish, will shortly be completed, and in daily occupation?

I, here and now, beloved, dare to reply, without, in the slightest degree, forgetting the honor that is due to God, and to the faithful in this parish, that, practically, all of it is due, (under God) to-day, to the saintly life and unceasing labor of your magnificent Rector. He coming among you, in the vigor of his young manhood, and, (in spite of the world's spirit of change and many temptations to go elsewhere) has remained with you these 40 years, without a single break:—

Giving himself for others :
With no thought, of his own;
That he might pour himself into his brothers;
And live for them alone!

Yes, beloved, your life-long Rector, like the Heavenly Father and Master whom he serves, has been, perpetually, a giver. Every aim, and thought, and high endeavor has been yours, and if, at times, he has gone up and down this city, appearing for the time being to be a *Getter*. it was always and only, believe me, that he, like a spiritual father, might return and give it out for the help and comfort of his children, of whom, like St. Paul, his dear heart was every crying out in flaming devotion—"My dearly beloved, and longed for, my hope and my joy."

What wonder, then, that, in the course of such a remarkable ministry "mighty works" should have been wrought by his devoted servant for Holy Church and for God ! That he should have baptized 2176, prepared and presented 1072 for confirmation, married 771 couples, and buried 1563.

But, at the best, in spite of the extraordinary size of these figures, how very unsatisfactory, after all is, in such tender relationships, cold and heartless arithmetic? How little does it record of the wealth of his very being, that this Rector has poured upon this people during these 40 years: with an ear ever open to your feeblest call for help, what guidings, what burden-bearings, what self-sacrifices in your behalf have been his? Surely, with St. Paul, he can this day say, without gainsaying, "Are ye timid and troubled and tempted?" So am I. "In weariness and painfulness: in watchings often!" "Who is weak and I am not weak ? Who is offended and I burn not?" Yea, in a real sense is he not like unto the Good Shepherd whose sweetest description is "He gave his life for the sheep?" Naturally, therefore, out of this ideal priestly-life there have flowed streams of living water to other portions of the kingdom. His many "sons and daughters" as they have gone out year after year from the Church of the Good Shepherd carrying with them everywhere something of his devoted love and consecrated life, as "a light to lighten the Gentiles," and the five priests, and two candidates for Holy Orders, who in a peculiar sense, have been 'begotten by him in Christ." Ah! what are they doing in their respective parishes this very hour, but

repeating His teaching, and re-living His saintly life in other centres of holy influence to the greater glory of the living God; as well as of His people Israel? What wonder, then, that this "Man-of-God" should find himself on this, his 40th anniversary, not only in the midst of a loving and loyal people, the greater number of whom he himself has baptized. But, also, so greatly honored and beloved by the entire Diocese, to whose clergy he is a standing example of the possibility and advisability of long rectorships. That they have tried to show their high regard for his stainless character, and steady and astonishing work by electing your Rector, just because he is, himself, "The Prince of Missionaries": the Dean of the Missionary Convocation of North Phila., making him thereby the practical head and leader of all the missionary work in this great city: the populous and growing district north of Market St. and between our two great rivers, containing 500,000 souls !

This, then, well beloved, is what we can see on this your 40th "Dedication-Day" as we take a look backward, and then a look around ! But, why not, before we close, take a look forward and see the even "greater things than these" that the Good Shepherd has in store for this most noble "Man of God" and his beloved people ?

For, as I look forward (1.) at your Rector: I see him as he grows older, growing, if possible, even richer and sweeter in character and life than ever he has been before. I see the Bishops and clergy, and laity of this Diocese, in ever increasing numbers, rising up and calling him blessed; declaring that, of a truth, his last days are his best days; that to know him is ever to love him for all that is pure and lovely, and of good report: and that their hearts' desire and prayer to God is ever, that they may follow him as he follows Christ, knowing that, when, at last, God shall call him to come up "higher," what shall be earth's irreparable loss will be heaven's eternal gain.

"How beauteous are their feet,
Who stand on Zion's hill;
Who bring salvation on their tongues;
And Christ our Lord reveal !

How happy are our ears
That hear this joyful sound;
Prophets and Kings desired it long;
They sought, but never found !

As I look forward to this Church and people, I see, with "the eye of faith," this vine that, 40 years ago, was tenderly planted by Dean Goodfellow, taking deep root sending out the boughs thereof, until it fills the land, the hills of this city being covered with the shadow of it, the branches reaching even unto the rivers. For when a Church like this lives and moves and has its being, under such leadership as this, having the testimony of a good conscience, in the Communion of the Catholic Church, in the confidence of a certaih faith, in the comfort of a reasonable, religious and holy hope, in favor with God, and in charity with the world ! Who, I ask, can limit to-day its resistless power any more than man can limit God's manifested presence, and overcoming might in the temple and tabernacle of old?

Though he, therefore, who, 40 years ago, founded this Church shall like Enoch and Elijah be one day translated, the church which he was privileged to establish shall, literally, live forever, better than any monument to him of metal or stone; for it shall be for him and his life work, a monument, better more lasting than bronze, soaring more high than regal pyramid :

"Which, nor the stealthy gnawing of the rain-drop;
Nor the vain rush of Boreas shall destroy;
Nor shall it pass away with the unnumbered series
of ages;
And the lapse of time."

For: though kings set themselves and rulers take counsel together against the Church which Christ came to found, to adorn, to purify, and then, to glorify. Against her none shall prevail, for the storm that beats against her shall be as harmless as though against a mountain. This seat of His desire, this palace of His presence, this living temple of the Living God, He will defend as with his omnipotence; Yes, by willing angels, by the Holy Ghost, by the inspired word, by indestructible sacraments, by many instruments and intermediaries; but chiefest of all, His own direct power among men, He triumphantly defends, yea, and will defend it, "till time shall be no more." Turning all her defeats into victories, setting her out among the instabilities of the world, as the one thing that cannot be shaken. Overthrowing nations, but preserving her; rolling a tide that makes peoples and their philosophies to sink and disappear,

while on this same tide, and over sin's "peopled sepulchres" He causes his Church, which is His Body: indestructably to ride.

"Oh, where are kings and empires now,
Of old, that went and came?
But, Lord, thy Church is praying yet,
A thousand years the same.

We mark her goodly battlements,
And her foundations, strong:
We hear within the solemn voice,
Of her unending song.

For, not like kingdoms of the world;
Thy Holy Church, O God,
Though earthquake shocks are threatening her,
And tempests are abroad.

Unshaken as the eternal hills,
Immovable she stands;
A mountain that will fill the earth;
A house not made with hands."